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HISTORICAL DIVISION
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General of Transportation
Affairs and Authorized
Transport Officer, later
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Regiment.

Volume XXI

THE CHIEF OF TRANSPORTATION AS REPRESENTATION
OF OKH INTERESTS IN TRANSPORTATION MATTERS:

The Outlying Stations of the Chief of
Transportation Affairs - Armed Forces
Chief of Transportation, Transport
Commander Office, General of Trans-
portation Affairs and Authorized Trans-
port Officer as Adviser to Their Com-
mand Agencies and in Executing Trans-
portation Missions.

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Born: 10 July 1902
in Berlin

Joining the Army in 1922, TESKE underwent training in the Munich and Oberdorf Infantry schools in 1923 - 25 and later in the Berlin War College in 1936 - 38.

When World War II broke out, TESKE was Supply Officer of the 5th Infantry Division. On 1 February 1940 he was assigned to 12th Infantry Division as Operations Officer, in which capacity he took part in the French Campaign. On 1 November 1940 he was transferred to the staff of Chief of Transportation, OKH with headquarters in Zossen and Berlin. From then on TESKE remained in the transportation services until late in 1944, serving as Authorized Transportation Officer attached to the Seventeenth Army in Galicia and Ukraine from 1 January to 31 December 1941, as German Plenipotentiary for Transportation in Finland from 1 January to 31 December 1942 and as General of the Transportation System in the Zone of Army Group Center, in Ruthenia and Poland from 1 January 1943 to 30 November 1944, his promotion to Colonel coinciding with his appointment to this office.

On 1 December 1944 Colonel TESKE was given command of the 326th Volksgrenadier Regiment, on the 28th of the same month was severely wounded. As a result of his injuries Colonel TESKE remained in hospital until November 1945, being captured in Laupheim, Wuerttemberg, on 24 April of that year.

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Appendix 1:

Composition and Strength of Forces at the Disposal of a General of Transportation Affairs.

A. INTRODUCTION

The variety of the various war theaters called for an elastic adaptability of the Railway Transportation Affairs System to the conditions at hand at the time.

In this connection the decisive factors were: the existing railway network and rolling stock; the existing native personnel (including administration); enemy action through existing destruction, guerillas, and aircraft; transportation missions based on the operational intentions of the command.

These factors determined the degree of influence exercised by the organization, strength, and composition of the outlying stations of the Chief of the Transportation Affairs and his subordinate formations and units. In the allied countries and to some extent in France as well, this influence was restricted to a comparatively small number of personnel supervising and supporting the native personnel. But in the East, where the above-mentioned factors were unfavorably effective to an unusual degree a purely German administration was imperative and the outlying stations of the Chief of Transportation Affairs had to be strong.

Therefore the following supplement will chiefly deal with the East as regards a general description of the organization and its missions and possibilities.

B. Organization, Missions and Possibilities

The main mission of all outlying stations of the Chief of Transportation Affairs was the establishment and maintenance of the connection between

the Army High Command and the command agencies at the front on the one hand and the Railway on the other hand. It consisted of transmitting and dealing with orders, demands, and wishes of the military sector and adapting them to the potentiality of the Railway, which also determined the organization.

The reasons for this often debated mediation instead of a direct contact between the parties were: the lack of technical railway experience on the part of the command agencies and the troops; the necessity of a central control over transports and of determining their urgency, sequence, and destination; the obligation to keep the designation of the unit to be moved secret from the Railway and their destination secret from the troops; the necessity of channeling all mutual wishes and demands and, in the process, of examining them as to their necessity, expediency, and practicability.

In Government Railway circles there was frequent discussion of the question of altering this system but having similar railway duty stations take over the tasks of the outlying stations of the Chief of Transportation Affairs. This change, however, would have occasioned an additional organization carefully prepared in time of peace and the enlistment of specially trained and trustworthy personnel. So there would have been no reduction in personnel, and friction would not have disappeared but would rather have increased. Consequently there would have been no clear advantage.

I. Organization (For diagram of final form in 1944 see Inclosure 1)

As they affected the organization in its final form, i.e. in 1944, the missions were as follows:

a. Territorial Transportation Duty Stations, i.e. such stations as were, in accordance with their tasks, attached to a Railway or a Field

Railway Administration of a foreign country. For example, Transport Control Headquarters or Transport Groups working with a Railway District Directorate or a Field Railway Section; the Armed Forces Chief of Transportation Affairs co-ordinated with a higher railway authority, a General or Managing Railway Directorate of our own or a foreign country and superior to the Transport Commander Offices as the former were superior to the Railway Directorates. An exceptional position was held by the Home Transportation Branch -- later the Armed Forces Chief of Transportation, Center -- in its co-operation with the supreme government authorities of Germany within its old frontiers and the Transport Groups of the Field Railway Sections at the front, for which they acted as a Transport Commander Office.

b. Operational Transportation Duty Stations, which in accordance with their advisory, planning, and supervising tasks were attached not to a Railway Duty Station but to an operational Railway Duty Station. They appointed the Authorized Transport Officers of the High Commands of armies and their superior Generals of Transportation Affairs of the High Commands of army groups, for whose professional support and as liaison to the Railway Authorities of their districts high Railway officials were attached. In carrying out their service tasks, Generals of Transportation Affairs and Authorized Transport Officers made use of the territorial duty stations which either were subordinated to the Generals of Transportation Affairs or had to follow their directives.

A varying position depending upon their sphere of action was held by the German Authorized Transport Officers in befriended foreign areas (Finland, Italy, Roumania, Hungary, etc.) as they were in accordance with their missions attached to both the territorial alien Railway Administration and the Operational German

Command Agency of that part of the front. The competencies of the territorial Transportation Duty Stations were identical with those of the Railway Authorities with whom they co-operated, and the competencies of the Operational Duty Stations with those of their army groups and armies. Overlapping could not always be avoided owing to frequent change of frontiers.

The chronological technical development of the Transportation Headquarters with regard to its outlying stations followed the progress set by the expansion of the occupied territory.

In time of peace the only outlying stations of the 5th (Transportation) Section of the General Staff of the Army were the Transport Commander Offices serving as liaison agents between the Corps Headquarters and the Railway Directorates. In case of mobilization only small staffs of the Authorized Transport Officers were provided for the High Commands of army groups and armies.

After the occupation of Poland (1939) and the northern and western European states, Transport Commander Offices were established there in accordance with the conditions in these countries. For closer control of transportation affairs this large area between the Bug-San line and the Atlantic coast had to be subdivided. For the area within the old frontiers of the Reich, the Home Transportation Branch was formed, at the start not as an outlying station but as a section of the Chief of Transportation Affairs. For the occupied territories and the Balkans, Railway Transportation Branches were formed, later called Transportation Commands of the Armed Forces, for the time being as intermediaries between the Chief of Transportation Affairs and the group of Transport Commander Offices of the respective district.

The same type of organization was applied to the broad eastern areas

occupied in 1941-42.

The Authorized Transport Officers of army groups and armies were theoretically co-ordinated until the middle of 1942 and were all subordinated directly to the Chief of Transportation Affairs. As this proved too impractical the position of a General Transport Officer of an army group of Transportation Affairs was created to replace the former Authorized causing a decentralization of the vague responsibilities of the Chief of Transportation Affairs and a centralization by groups and territories at the front. All duty stations, formations, and units pertaining directly or indirectly to the Transportation System were subordinated as a whole or in part to this General as far as they were active in the area of the army group. He further had the right to give instructions to co-operating rear Transportation Duty Stations concerning transports moved in his area. For the same reason when complicated conditions prevailed in South Russia following the advance on Stalingrad and the Caucasus in 1942, a further temporary centralization of the areas of the army groups and in part the 3 Army Groups and their Generals of Transportation Affairs was effected by which they were subordinated to an Authorized General of Transportation Affairs in South Russia.

The widening of the occupation areas was causing a shortage of personnel for the outlying stations of the Chief of Transportation Affairs. In all operational Transportation Duty Stations the positions of the commanders and first assistants, and in the Armed Forces Chief of Transportation Office at least those of the first assistants, had to be filled now by general staff officers who in time of peace had been in charge of the Transport Commander Offices on account of the type of work done there during the concentration period. These qualified appointments were caused by the necessity of having

a knowledge of operations. Besides, they remedied the shortcomings caused by the old age of the other personnel. The average age of all officers at the outlying stations -- mostly of reserve status -- was such that only 20.9 percent were under 44 years old but 79.1 percent were more than 45 years old, the average being 50 years.

Petty officers and enlisted personnel, mostly former professional men, were above average from the point of men of intelligence, as was necessary to meet the demands upon them.

II. Missions

a. Territorial Duty Stations. The main task of a Transport Commander Office in peacetime was to prepare the mobilization and concentration transports according to orders from the 5th (Transportation) Section of the General Staff of the Army, i.e. the replacement transports to replenish the personnel and materiel of the formations in action and to create new formations, to make decisions about time and location of loading and off-loading areas, and to safeguard all incoming, outgoing, and transit transportation at the outbreak of war, all in close co-operation with the pertinent neighboring Transport Commander Offices, with the Corps Headquarters of their district and with the L Office of the competent Railway Authorities (office of the authorized agent).

During the war these planning tasks ranked second to the daily work, and the Transport Commander Office lost its operational importance. Its field of activity -- and after the establishment of the Armed Forces Chief of Transportation Affairs his field of activity as well -- consisted in meeting all demands of the front on the home and rear areas and the consequent conclusions as to construction and security problems. They included:

Preparation and supervision of troop movements and single troop transports on orders of the Chief of Transportation or the Armed Forces Chief of Transportation, their loading and off-loading, their composition and sequence, their passage without friction and their direction.

Supervising the punctual loading, preparing the necessary rolling stock, and moving supplies of ammunition, fuel, equipment, provisions.

Governing the movements of transports of armament material.

Unloading evacuated property damaged equipment, etc. from the front.

Controlling the evacuation of wounded, and the movement of men on leave, official tours, and courier service.

Supervision of available road blocks, insufficient unloading, and lack of rolling stock.

Examining and requesting construction to improve the loading and line capacity (firing spurs, ramps, and delivery roadways).

Attending to road and bridge building.

Securing air protection and protection of equipment and lines against surprise attacks.

Wehrmacht tariff questions.

Making reports on departure, arrival, and transit of all personnel and materiel transports through the Armed Forces Chief of Transportation to the Chief of Transportation or if necessary to the competent operational Transportation Duty Station for evaluation and preparation of operational command records.

Preparing inland waterway transports for the Wehrmacht and for armament. In this case the planning and giving of orders was attended to by the Field Transportation Branch (in case of construction by the Planning Branch) or by

a general of Transportation Affairs; execution was attended to by the Transport Commander Office.

The supplementary missions of the Armed Forces Chief of Transportation, within the framework of the above-mentioned fields of activity, were as follows:

Co-ordination of orders from above and reports from below from the subordinated Transport Commander Office groups.

Bringing about agreement and adjustment in connection with tasks attended to by several Transport Commander Offices.

Directing transports within the district itself which had not been ordered by the Chief of Transportation Affairs.

Co-operation with the neighboring Home Transportation Branch and the Generals of Transportation Affairs with regard to punctual passage of transports in transit.

Supervision of empties assigned for a definite purpose and of supply trains halted in transit, and of important transports having priority in right of way.

Blocking or throttling traffic to meet emergencies.

Supervising constructions projects ordered.

All these activities were carried on in close co-operation with the competent Railway General or Managing Directorate.

In the case of the field railway sections active at the front and generally subordinated to a General of Transportation Affairs, which might be called mobile military Railway Directorates, the tasks of the Transport Commander Office were attended to by the so-called Transportation Group.

The personnel and means at the disposal of the Territorial Transportation

Duty Stations for their work included in addition to their staffs: the Rail Depot Traffic Officers (later Rail Depot Commander Offices I and II) and at the front the Off-Loading Commissioners, whose duty it was, again in close co-operation with the Railway Duty Stations involved, to support these as well as the troops in loading and off-loading, to supervise them, and to make the necessary reports; the forwarding stations, mostly at the frontier, which had the task of forwarding individual supply transports, after receipt of all documents, to the station of the consignees; its own communications net connecting the Territorial Transportation Duty Stations, for ensuring the necessary transmission of orders and messages.

b. Operational Duty Stations. Whereas the point of main effort of the Territorial Transportation Duty Stations was to establish a connection between the Chief of Transportation Affairs and the Railway, the Operational Transportation Duty Stations were intended primarily to link the Chief of Transportation Affairs with a higher command agency and to be his adviser in all transportation matters, chiefly for co-ordinating the demands of the front with the capacity of the means of transportation.

Until the end of 1942 the Authorized Transport Officers of army groups and armies were simply advisory in nature with no authority and only a little power in transportation matters. The equality of their practical duties, delimited only by the mutually overlapping general fields, caused frequent friction.

At this juncture the creation of the Duty Station "General of Transportation Affairs" in the High Command of an army group brought about a fundamental change, as the responsibility for the solution of all transportation questions in the realm of the army group and the subordinated armies was now allotted to this new station.

In this way the Authorized Transport Officers of armies still had the same duties as before but they were only outlying stations of the General of Transportation Affairs of the army group in their army headquarters. This centralization of responsibility resulted in a considerable increase in the duties of the Generals of Transportation Affairs as compared with those of the former Authorized Transport Officers in the army group and necessitated the tactical subordination of all transportation formations, units, and duty stations in the army group area. By this measure a mixed transport formation under a joint command -- though only loosely connected -- was created and able to fulfill all tasks in the frame of operations, for the first time. (As to their composition see outline Inclosure 1, as to their strength Inclosure 2.)

The field of activity of the operational Transportation Duty Stations in general was: planning and supervising all transports; repairs, improvements, or destruction; message communication service; security measures.

Its importance varied with the different theaters of war and changed according to the intentions of the High Command or enemy actions. There was, for instance, a great difference in carrying out measures with the use of a highly developed Western-European railway system or that of the primitive, wide-meshed net in the East. Security measures against guerilla warfare in Italy, the Balkans, or White Russia were different from those in the countries of the West threatened from the air.

Stated in detail, the tasks of the Operational Transportation Duty Stations and the forces and means at the disposal of the General of Transportation Affairs were as follows:

1. Planning and Carrying Out Transports. Foremost of all tasks was the carrying out and supervision of troop movements, single transports, and materiel transports to and from the front ordered by the Chief of Transportation Affairs. Transports of the same category called for by the High Commands of army groups and armies ranked second. The possibility of carrying out the second type depended upon: determining their necessity; the presence of a sufficient stock of empties for supplies; the possibility of adaptation to the prepared timetable of trains.

The problems to be solved in close co-operation with the sections of the High Command of the army group were in particular:

With the General Staff Officer in Charge of Supply and Administration at Headquarters of Field Forces: determining the contingents for supply and evacuation allocated to the routes according to the requirements, the lines, and the rail depot capacities; supervising the contingents, in case of difficulties removing the hindrance; determining the loading and unloading stations; supervising loading and unloading; reporting to all consignees on expected supply trains; co-operation in determining new supply points or bases; arranging detours, parking, and arrangements for urgent and important supply trains; preventing direct negotiations between the General Staff Officers in Charge of Supply and Administration at Headquarters of Field Forces and the Railway authorities.

With the tactical group of General Staff Sections: determining loading and off-loading areas of arriving and departing movements as to position, intention, and loading capacity; the same with regard to single transports of troops; choosing the route for transports within the district; handling and shifting the reserve stock of empties according to operational requirements;

determining priorities in right of way; announcing all troop transports to the army group.

To give an example of the scope of purely transportation tasks a few figures may be cited relating to the area of Army Group Center:

With a strength varying from about 1,600,000 to 1,700,000 men and 300,000 to 400,000 horses, the requirement in supply trains from the Zone of the Interior in August 1943, i.e. during a time of continuous action along almost the whole front of the army group, as a consequence of Operation "Zitadelle", was as follows:

	<u>Daily</u>	<u>Monthly</u>
Ammunition	6,173.0	195.5
Fuel	2.6	82.5
Provisions	8.3	257.0

In addition, other supply trains (equipment, Air Force, hospital trains, and other transports from rear supply stations) totaled 1,627 trains. At the same time the number of troop trains was 1,324.

Months of little activity at the front were made use of to fill out the supply stocks. But in months of major engagements the number of troop transports increased and limited the number of supply trains. The following figures refer to the very quiet month of April 1943 and for comparison, to July 1944 during the offensive against Minsk.

	April 1943	July 1944
Supply trains	1,731	404
Troop trains	885	1,641

In the case of traffic difficulties, such as blocking or interruption of

traffic or, stagnation in off-loading, the General of Transportation Affairs ordered the closing or choking of lines in agreement with the managing railway authorities, to be lifted for specific operational transports by special measures such as recall orders. At the desire of his command agency he also ordered acceleration of individual transports by giving them "preference".

For carrying through purely transportation tasks the General of Transportation Affairs had at his disposal, in his commanding and supervising capacity: for the traffic at the front, one or two subordinated Field Railway Branches with their Transport Groups; for the traffic in the rearward Army area the German Government Railway with a Transport Commander Office in each district subordinated to the General of Transportation Affairs as his representative and liaison agency.

The same tasks which the Generals of Transportation Affairs had in the whole region of the army group were fulfilled by their subordinated Authorized Traffic Officers in their areas, allowing them a certain necessary independence especially during mobile warfare.

Where conditions, such as guerilla warfare, navigability, or necessary bottoms, permitted, the Field Waterway Branches were of great aid to the forces and relieved the railways by partial evacuation of wounded for instance.

2. Repairs, Construction, and Demolition. During advance movements the General of Transportation Affairs suggested order and urgency of routes and objects to be repaired with due regard to the operational intentions of his command agency, the Chief of Transportation, and based on the reports of the Railway Engineer Brigade. In many cases a decision had to be made by him or even by the Authorized Transport Officer of an army in consequence of lack of communications.

The question of whether a line should be changed to normal gauge was decided by the Chief of Transportation Affairs. In case the line was urgently needed for the front the change could be postponed provided wide-gauge rolling stock and locomotives were available and in good working order. But as they were generally found to be scarce a quick change of gauge was usually imperative.

Provisional construction to enable emergency traffic was carried out by the Railway Engineers. They were closely followed by the Field Railway Sections to continue the work and finally the Government Railway completed construction and introduced regular traffic.

When operations came to a standstill the existing installations were improved according to operational and tactical exigencies through: construction intended to increase the capacity of routes, rail depots, and loading; field railways to overcome roadless terrain, especially during muddy seasons; replacing auxiliary bridges with permanent structures; establishing rail connections to air fields, supply installations, etc.

In this connection decisions were based on the minimum requirement of at least one efficient supply line for each army, and one through cross-connecting line near the front as well as another farther to the rear for each army; and, by connecting locally via the anticipated point of main effort or available storage facilities, an increase in unloading capacity.

Before application, these schemes, often proposed by the troops, had to be examined as to time, labor, and materials needed in proportion to the desired purpose as well as to its urgency. In most cases the labor of the Transportation System was insufficient and the future beneficiary had to help with his own, construction squads, etc.

In withdrawals and evacuations it was the duty of the General of Transportation Affairs on the one hand to maintain traffic as long as possible and on the other hand to order withdrawal early enough to enable evacuation and the necessary demolitions to prevent the enemy from following up quickly. The degree of demolition, depending on the speed of withdrawal and on later operational intentions, varied between interruptions (bridge girders and rails only) or wholesale demolitions (piles and superstructure).

For carrying out all these tasks the General of Transportation Affairs had at his disposal a Railway Engineer Brigade subordinated to him, a Railway Signal Regiment assigned to co-operate, and, upon demand, construction squads and trains of civilian companies. They were generally active only in the areas near the front whereas in the territory of the Government Railway they performed auxiliary services only.

3. Security. Securing routes and installations as well as active and passive air protection in their territories was a further task of the Operational Transportation Duty Stations.

Only the transports themselves were safeguarded with the resources of the General of Transportation Affairs himself for which purpose he had one or more Transport Covering Regiments and Railway Antiaircraft Units at hand, whose activity was controlled by the Transport Commander Office.

The safeguarding of routes and installations such as bridges, rail depots, etc., however, was the task of the command agencies themselves, on the basis of records supplied by the Operational Transportation Duty Station, which also made suggestions.

The following figures give an example of the scope of interference through

guerilla and air attacks in the sector of Army Group Center, with a total trackage of 10,000 - 12,000 km.

1943	Feb.	May	Aug.	Nov.
Guerilla attacks (successful)	393	765	1,392	952
Air attacks	---	159	152	22

During or before enemy offensives the number of guerilla attacks increased considerably, sometimes to the extent of short major actions. For instance, during the Orel offensive during the night of 2-3 August 1943 with 8,422 successful and 2,478 unsuccessful explosions, a total of 10,900; or during the night of 19-20 June 1944 before the Russian offensive against Minsk, with 10,500 successful and 3,500 unsuccessful explosions, a total of 14,000. The consequence always was an interruption of the lines for several days or weeks.

4. Message Communication System. One of the most important tasks of the Transportation Duty Stations was current reporting to their command agencies and the Chief of Transportation Affairs on all anticipated and actual times of departure, transit, or arrival of all transports of personnel and materiel by means of a suitable message communication system.

These reports, constituting one of the foundations for decisions by the operational command, were as a rule given twice daily. In case of important transports, especially of arms or troops they were more often.

In addition, daily reports were necessary for the supervision of traffic for the Transportation Duty Stations -- on unloading, trains blocked, frontier crossing, and loading, divided up into troop and supply transports.

The material for information and reports was supplied by reports of the territorial Transport Duty Stations (Transport Commander Offices and Transport Groups) and their outlying stations (Off-loading Commissioners and Rail Depot Commanders), who compared them with the traffic reports of the railway duty stations to verify their correctness.

III. Possibilities for Action by the Operational Transportation Duty Stations, as Shown by Examples

Whereas the tasks of the territorial Transportation Duty Stations remained the same on account of their being tied to the spot and to the Railway Authorities of local competency, the operational Transportation Duty Stations under the constantly changing conditions at the front had always to arrive at new decisions apt to influence the development of operations.

The main tasks of the Transportation System during an advance movement were the quick repair and opening of the lines most suitable for operational purpose and the bringing up of supplies; during defense they involved creating, consolidating, and safeguarding methods of bringing formations to the front or displacing them laterally; and during a retreat they included evacuation measures and preventing the enemy from following quickly by rail.

In the following pages the possibilities presented by the conditions prevailing during these phases will be shown and examples from the writer's own experience will be given.

a. An Advance Movement

1. Quick Opening of Tactically Important Region Impassable During the Muddy Season, by Applying Auxiliary Repair and Traffic Measures.

At the beginning of November 1941 the 17th Army was fighting in the

Donets Basin with its front line at Artemowsk - Slawjansk - Isjum. Terminal stations suitable for its supply at that time are Dnjepropetrowsk and Krasnograd or Poltawa. Distance to the front 200 - 250 km.

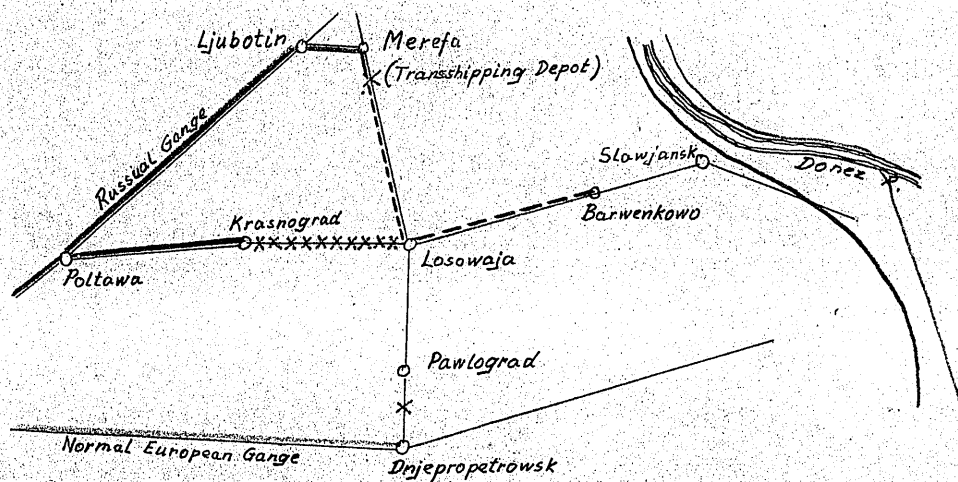
The muddy season impedes not only all traffic but also the continuation of railway construction work in an easterly direction, by preventing any activity by construction squads with their equipment and materiel on time, so that repair work on these routes is considerably retarded. It is necessary to complete two lines as the standard-gauge southern line via Dnjepropetrowsk has to be shared with the 1st Panzer Army and the broad-gauge line via Poltawa with the 6th Army.

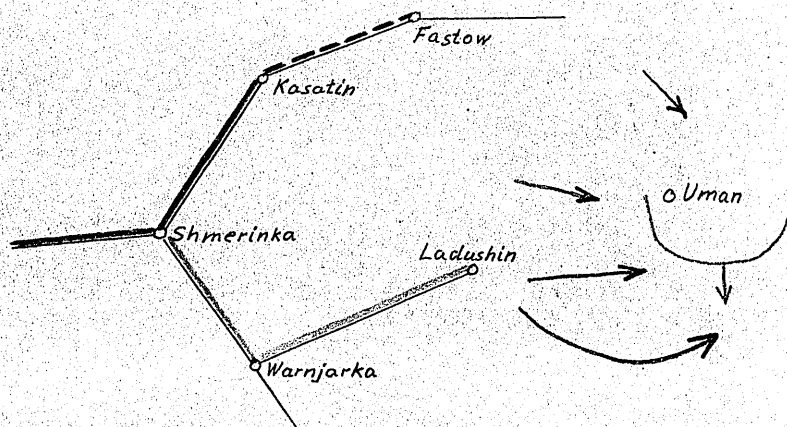
It is essential to connect with the railroad the tactically important region of the Donez bend at Slawjansk, difficult to reach on account of bad roads. This is only feasible via Losowaja, the approaches to which, however, are blocked from the south by the destruction of the large Samara bridge at Pawlograd, from the west by heavy demolitions on the Krasnograd-Losowaja line and from the north by a minor blasting of a bridge south of Merefa, which can be reached by rail. *

It is therefore resolved in spite of the considerable detour to connect Losowaja with the broad-gauge Poltawa - Ljubotin - Merefa line, to tranship there, and to establish a shuttle traffic on the undemolished Merefa - Losowaja-Barwenkowo line for the time being, using what little rolling stock has been found there.

2. Getting into Working Order Quickly a Line Originally Not Provided for the Purpose, to Supply a Heavily Fighting Part of the Front. Almost all maintenance units are active on the Shmerinka - Kasatin - Fastow main supply line when in August 1941 the battle of encirclement at Uman begins.

* See sketch page 18a





The columns are insufficient to complete the long distance from the terminus at Shmerinka to the right wing of the 17th Army which in hard fighting is going to prevent the breakthrough of the enemy at Golowanewsk in a southerly direction (150 km.). *

Decision: To withdraw enough labor from intended repair work on the Shmerinka - Fastow line and to use it for provisional repairs of the Shmerinka - Wapnjarka - Ladyshin branch line which according to quickly gained information has been only slightly damaged. Construction of primitive unloading facilities. To reroute the ammunition trains from Shmerinka via Wapnjarka to Ladyshin, shortening the way for the columns to only 50 km.

3. Deadline for Crossing a Big River Depends Upon Arrival of a Heavy Ammunition Train

a. For carrying out the crossing of the Dnjepr at Derijewka heavy artillery ammunition is lacking. An expected train with heavy field howitzer ammunition is still far away in the hinterland.

Decision: An officer is sent to fly in a "Storch" along the line to ascertain the whereabouts of the train, to board it, and to bring it home personally. The "Storch" plane is sent back with a message regarding the location of the train. At the same time preparations in the form of areas for columns, labor, etc. are made for the transshipment at Golta-Perwomaisk which has become necessary on account of the blasting of a bridge.

b. After forming a small bridgehead the enemy tries to crush it with strong counterattacks. Our own air forces lack release ammunition to fight back and to attack enemy concentrations at the rear.

Decision: Gaining empties through forcible unloading, sending them back to

* See sketch page 18b.

an air field at the rear, loading and forwarding them again as a special transport by taking the right of way regardless of consequences.

b. Defense

1. Successful Special Measures Taken to Hasten the necessary Advance of a Formation. In February 1943 the enemy attacks with strong forces the southern end of the Orel bend southeast of Brjansk.

Simultaneously with the usual supply and railway service transports an armored division is moved from Smolensk to Brjansk to prevent a breakthrough on Brjansk, taxing the railway to full capacity (18 trains daily).

After off-loading the first transports south of Brjansk, a new and much stronger attack by the enemy on Shidra places the northern flank at the Orel bend in a difficult position which begins to show its effects on the whole front of the 2nd Army.

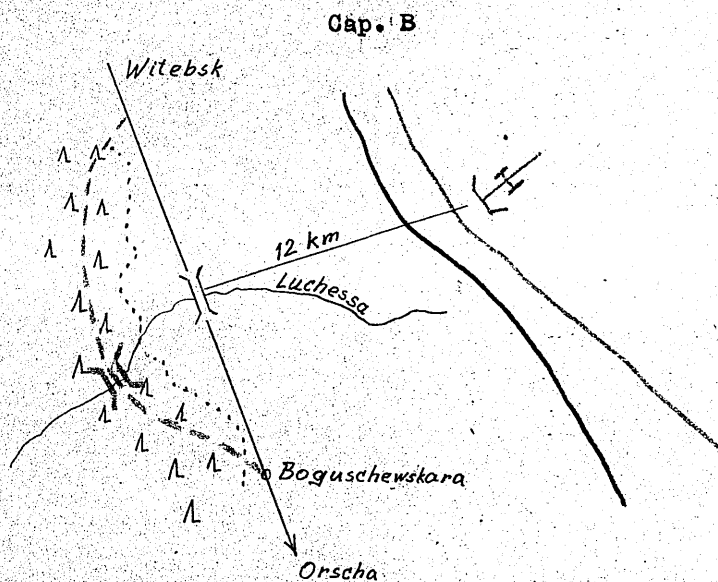
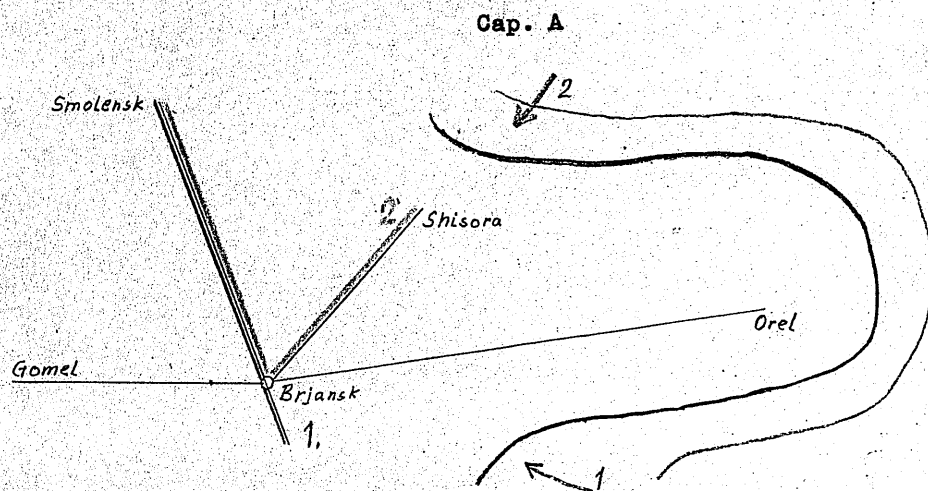
Decision: Turning the movement of the armored division from Brjansk to Shidra. Acceleration of speed on the Smolensk - Brjansk line by special measures (moving in pairs) to almost double capacity. Rerouting via Orscha - Unotscha and Minsk - Gomel all other transports using this line. *

2. Securing the Supply of a Fortified Place on a Railway Line Under Constant Enemy Artillery Fire **

During the struggle for the northern corner-stone of Army Group Center, Witebsk, in the spring of 1944, numerous formations fighting in a narrow area are supplied by the double-tracked railway from Orscha to Witebsk running relatively close to the fighting line. A bridge spanning the Luchessa north of Boguschewskaja in an elevated position has been under continuously observed artillery fire since February (in February 67, surprise fires, in March 83,

* See sketch page 20a Cap A

** See sketch page 20a Cap B



in April 42; completely blocked in March alone for 180 hours and single-tracked for 224 hours.

Decision: Construction of a detour line 6.5 km. long, camouflaged by the forest.

3. Auxiliary Measures to Secure a Heavily Used Line Exposed to Serious Guerilla Activity. In September 1943 the Gomel - Shlobin - Minsk line is heavily loaded with evacuation transports and with supply transports to the front, in consequence of the withdrawal to the Dnjepr. In proportion the attacks by the well-informed and well-led guerillas have increased on these lines by 50 percent. There is a daily average of 3.5 attacks on the Gomel - Shlobin line and 5 attacks on the Shlobin - Minsk line, some in the form of serial blastings with proportionate disruption of traffic.

As the whole traffic situation, that is, both evacuation and the supply of the fighting forces, are badly hampered, the Army Group decides on account of lack of manpower to off-load immediately at the line formations which were originally provided to serve as replacements for the front and to use them instead for protection of the line, in order to strengthen the weak forces.

4. Organizing an Area with Poor Traffic Facilities. After occupation of the Dnjepr position by Army Group Center the main traffic takes place in a region badly organized, as neither the Tsarist Government nor the Soviet Union attached any importance to it. On the contrary the Soviet Union followed the principle of maintaining a dead strip of land along the frontiers and purposely neglected the region between the Dnjepr and the Bug.

As this has always been a region of through traffic there are only installations to serve its maintenance. Large railroad yards for the formation

of trains as well as unloading facilities of adequate capacity are lacking. The consequence is in the first place a considerable stoppage of evacuation trains that cannot be dispatched and of supply trains that cannot be unloaded.

By an exceptional use of Railway Engineers 28 track connections and 24 ramps were constructed within two months and 11 ramps enlarged, causing considerable relief.

5. Importance of Message Communications System as Basis for Operations.

After the collapse of the Army Group Center during the last week of June 1944, 1,641 troop transport trains arrived during July, i.e., more than 54,7 trains daily, of which 909 trains were within movements. The disrupted or overtaxed telephone connections obstructed the former message communications system or rendered it useless.

In order to give the High Commands of army groups and armies the necessary information on the anticipated arrivals, the composition and order of urgently needed trains and their contents, as well as the routes taken (for rerouting purposes), in order to enable them to make their decisions, temporary measures of all kinds had to be taken, such as establishing advance message centers, collecting important news by airplanes, using telephone detours (via the Field Transportation Branch), etc.

c. Retreat

1. Measures to Prevent the Enemy from Following Quickly by Rail. In withdrawals it is important to prevent the enemy from making immediate use of an undemolished line to bring up ammunition and other supplies. It may be assumed that he moves daily:

On a single track railway 6,000 - 8,000 tons.

On a double track railway 10,000 - 12,000 tons.

The troop generally endeavors to use all bridges as long as possible, including such railway bridges as owing to their strength need long and thorough preparation for destruction. Through abuse of this fact it happened several times during withdrawals of Army Group Center in the years 1943-44 that important bridges fell into enemy hands undemolished and were of immediate advantage to him.

The blame must be laid on the fact that the bridge was used up to the last moment, even by armoured trains, to ensure the withdrawal and that the units which had the last contact with the enemy received the blasting orders.

Therefore the Army Group issues orders at the recommendation of the General of Transportation Affairs that on principle the High Commands of the armies should be the final authority to give blasting orders which should be carried out at an early time.

2. Effective Measures Taken by the Operational Transportation Duty Stations in Connection with Evacuations.

a. Withdrawals According to Plan. The evacuation of Rshew, Orel, Brjansk and Smolensk according to plan proved that in spite of timely preparations many important supplies and stationary installations had to be left behind for lack of traffic facilities (loading capacity) and empties and had to be destroyed.

Only after earnest representations by the Duty Stations of the Army Chief Supply and Administration Officer was it decided by the Duty Stations of the supply services to ease the hold on all depots to the rear. To claim transportation space twice (home area to rear depot and rear depot to front) is the lesser of two evils. The order is given to fix the calendar dates for further evacuations through co-operation of the supply services and Transportat-

ion Duty Stations (according to the degree of urgency, need of empties, utilization of loading facilities).

b. Forced Withdrawals. Unprepared evacuations, for instance, after the collapse of the Central Army Group in June-July 1944, must be improvised. Experience has taught that it is useful to create an organization at the loading point for sifting, and at the frontier crossing for intercepting and forwarding.

The unsifted and uncontrolled departure of evacuation trains and the attempt to stop them too early at the frontier for sifting purposes caused bad stoppages of homebound trains. For instance, on 3 July 1944 65 evacuation trains, some carrying wounded men, were standing in close order, the hindmost under Russian artillery fire.

Only the ruthless forwarding of evacuation trains to distant destinations in the home area will ensure the mobility necessary at this juncture.

IV. Tasks and Possibilities of a German Authorized Transport Officer in Friendly Foreign Countries

The representatives of the Chief of Transportation Affairs in allied and friendly foreign countries held a special position. Their organization and tasks varied according to the peculiarity of the country in which they were stationed, its distance from the front, and the strength of the German influence. In what follows the German Authorized Transportation Officer in Finland will be dealt with, based on own experiences (1942).

His organizational contacts were as follows: with the German Chief of Transportation Affairs only loose contact, which was true of all northern Transportation Duty Stations, their working spheres being independent; with the High Command of the Armed Forces, home staff overseas, in its capacity of consignor of all

transports from Germany; with the Mountain Army - High Command 20 and Air-fleet 5 as consignees of all transports; with the Finnish Chief of Transportation Affairs and his organization for carrying out all transports in Finland itself; and, with the Transport Officer of the Military Attache at Stockholm regarding transit transports through Sweden.

Acting in unison with these stations it was his task to prepare and guide all German transports to, within, and from Finland by rail or seagoing vessels. The problem was to reconcile the demands of the applicants with the existing traffic facilities so that there were no stoppages of material or personnel to be moved, nor of precious empties, a task that could be accomplished only by treating each problem in land or sea transportation as an indivisible whole.

The most important obstacles were: in sea transportation -- Russian submarines, mines, and the necessity of convoying vessels, the effects of weather (freezing of the Baltic in the winter of 1941-42), lack of bottoms; in rail transportation in Finland -- lack of empties and locomotives, traffic deficiencies (locomotives fired with wood, small capacity), poor unloading. To lessen or eliminate these difficulties the Transportation Service contributed the following solutions: laying of a net obstacle through the Gulf of Finland from Reval (Tallinn) to Helsinki as a successful countermeasure against submarine and mine attacks by the Russian navy; construction of a field railway 300 km. long (400 tons daily) from Hyrynsalmi via Kuusamo to Kiestinki (southern flank of the 20th Mountain Army) to relieve the line Kemi-Alakurti; Introduction of a firm 14-day transportation program for the adjustment of administrative shortcomings of the Finnish State Railway; supplying captured

Russian broad-gauge railway material in support of the Finnish State Railway (in 1942: 123 locomotives and 1750 cars).

C. Summary and Critical Review

The value of a critical review is lowered by the shortness of time elapsed since the events, by a lack of suitable comparisons, and other circumstances. The following review, therefore, can only deal briefly with the experiences gained at the time as an immediate consequence of the activity.

I. Organization

a. The organization of the outlying stations of the Chief of Transportation Affairs met its test whenever it adapted itself to prevailing conditions.

If mistakes were made it was rather through applying too many than too few efforts. In most cases it did not answer the purpose to meet technical difficulties by using new organizations alien to the territory, but it always proved successful to strengthen existing institutions in quality and in quantity, preferably through giving them greater mobility (air planes) and sufficient signal communication (radio).

b. The appointment of the Generals of Transportation Affairs may be called a happy stroke as it created a center for an area around which the different parts of the Transportation System could gather. To make evident the practical existence of a Transportation Corps through a more rigid military type of organization would have been a further step in this direction.

c. Experience in many critical situations has taught that in the outlying stations of the Chief of Transportation Affairs as elsewhere the situation was not mastered by the theorist but by the practical soldier.

II. Tasks

a. Lack of command authority often proved to be a hindrance in carrying out the work of the lower outlying stations such as rail depot commander offices, e.g. in case of evacuation, poor unloading, interference by troops in traffic affairs, etc. A limited degree of executive power exercised through field riflemen or rural police units could have remedied the situation.

b. Large construction schemes were often outlived by the course of events before they were finished because the troops were not in position to judge the situation and formed an incorrect opinion in spite of warnings of the Transport Duty Stations regarding the time necessary for their execution. To save precious labor and materiel higher or supreme command agencies capable of a broader view should have been engaged.

c. In spite of close connections with the organs in charge of commitment, covering parties were frequently wasted on secondary objects and could have been more usefully employed on important lines. It is worth considering whether security troops should not have been subordinated as a whole or in part, and in the latter case on a mobile basis with a view to concentrating them as required. (As a rule Transportation covering units were used for the purpose.)

d. The message system, over developed, in the course of every war was burdened with unnecessary messages on deadlines or repeat messages to such an extent that important information suffered. Decentralization of responsibility would have corrected the situation.

III. Possibilities for Exercising Influence

The most successful way to exercise influence proved to be the personal

contact of commanders and duty station officers at danger points and in critical situations, which cannot be substituted for by wire, radio, or written messages.

Arrangements for a steadily increasing mobility would have widened such possibilities.

Composition and Strength of Forces at the Disposal of a
General of Transportation Affairs

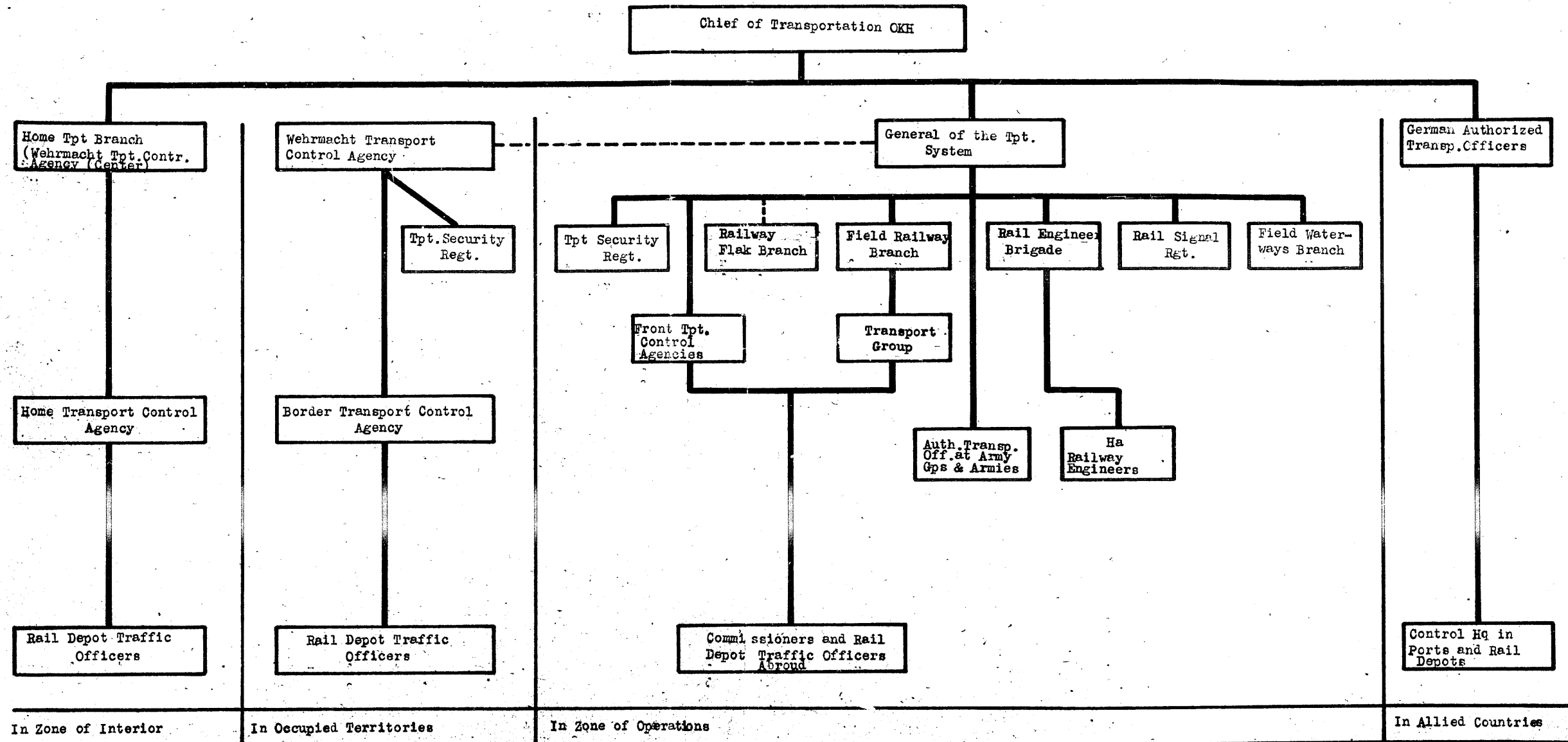
Staff of the General of Transportation Affairs	117
4 Authorized Transportation Officers Attached to Armies	83
Transport Commander Office with	
1 Off-loading Commissioner and 15 Rail Depot Commander Offices . . .	253
Field Railway Section with	
Staff	
Transport Group with 5 Off-loading Commissioners and 10 Rail Depot	
Commander Offices	
4 Field Operation Branches	
3 Field Machinery Branches	
2 Field Workshop Branches	
1 Regional Defence Battalion	
1 Field Railway Training Battalion total	22,112
Railway Engineer Brigade with	
1 Brigade Staff, 1 regimental Staff	
7 Battalion Staffs	
58 Companies, total	14,858
Transport Covering Regiment with	
Regimental Staff	
11 Battalions, total	8,617
Field Waterways Branch	1,171
Light Antiaircraft Unit	600

Railway Signal Regiment with

Regimental Staff

2 Units, .total. 1,500Total 51,010

Field Agencies of the
Chief of Transportation.



Subordinate

Command Authority